



SOUTH BAY WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP

MEETING AGENDA

South Bay Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG)

THURSDAY, January 10, 2013

2:00 p.m.

Living Coast Discovery Center

1000 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista, CA 91910

**Please take the shuttle from the Foot of E street
NO LATER than 1:30 p.m. to ensure timely start time.**

- I. Introductions
- II. Public Comment (non-agenda comment)
- III. Action Items:
 - a. Approve minutes of the meeting of November 8, 2012. (Attachment A)
 - b. NRMP CONSENSUS DISCUSSION AND INPUT TO TIERRA DATA INC on Vision Statement, Sea-Level Rise and Marine Habitats and Water Quality: Provide guidance to consultant on synthesized outcomes of two focus group meetings for incorporation in NRMP: Sea Level Rise and Marine Life, Habitats, and Water Quality. (Attachment B)
 - c. Review and consideration of approval of Ad-Hoc Committee (Hunter, Rolfe, Pieters, Peugh, Kershek, McCoy) draft letter to the Port District on Pond 20 development proposals and WAG position. (Attachment C)
- IV. Schedule next Agenda and Meeting Dates:

Focused Discussion of Designated Ad-Hoc teams

- Fauna: January 18, 2013, 9am-1pm, Port Administration Building
- Flora: January 24, 2013, 1-5pm, Port Administration Building
- Adjacency Impacts: February 7, 2013, 9am-1pm, Port Administration Building
- Education: March 1, 2013, 9am-1pm, Port Administration Building

Consensus Meetings (Entire WAG):

- Consensus II: February 21, 2013, 2-4pm, Living Coast Discovery Center
- Consensus III & Implementation: March 14, 2013, 2-5:30pm, Living Coast Discovery Center

November 8, 2012 Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting Summary

Members in Attendance: Allison Rolfe, CVBMP Developer/Tenant (Pacifica); Amanda Grant, Living Coast Discovery Center, Educational Programs (LCDP); Andy Yuen, US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); Clayton Tschudy, Empower San Diego; Edward Pieters, Chula Vista Resident; Emily Young, San Diego Foundation; Jeremy Haas, Regional Water Quality Control Board; Jim Peugh, San Diego Audubon Society; Laura Hunter, Environmental Health Coalition; Marcela Escobar-Eck, Chula Vista Bayfront Developer/Tenant; Michael Mace, San Diego Zoo; Michael McCoy, Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association; Sandy Vissman, FWS; Todd Cardiff, San Diego Surfrider Foundation; Travis Pritchard, San Diego Coastkeeper.

Port Staff present were: Eileen Maher, Bill McMinn, Michelle White and Bonnie Russell (minutes). City Staff present: Marisa Lundstedt.

The WAG meeting was convened at the Living Coast Discovery Center at 2:05 p.m. on Thursday, November 8, 2012 by Co-Chair Allison Rolfe.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Agenda Item 3.a: *Approve minutes of the meeting of September 27, 2012.*

Committee Action: The minutes were approved with the correction on page two; Agenda Item 3.b, second paragraph, third sentence to change "force" to "require" and on page two; Agenda Item 3.b, fifth paragraph entitled "Committee Action" clarify that Todd Cardiff opposed due to concern on the grounds of efficiency. Minutes approved unanimously with Travis Pritchard, Jeremy Haas, and Mike McCoy abstaining due to absence.

Agenda Item 3.b *Authorize cancellation of Oct 11, 2012 meeting.*

Committee Action: Motion to cancel was made by Sandy Vissman and second by Michael Mace. All in favor, Jeremy Haas abstained, none opposed.

Agenda Item 3.c *Authorize the Chair and Vice-Chair to convene/cancel/change venue/set workshops or take other actions necessary to facilitate effective and timely meetings and discussions of the group without a full vote of the WAG. Actions will be reported to the WAG in a timely manner via email.*

Eileen Maher recommended that the 2013 dates for the regular WAG meeting be set and the Chair and Vice-Chair can cancel as needed. It was suggested that we set the same schedule of second Thursdays each month to be reserved for the WAG meetings.

Committee Action: Motion was made by Jim Peugh, with a second by Todd Cardiff, Marcela Escobar-Eck and Michael Mace. All in favor, Jeremy Haas abstained, none opposed.

Agenda Item 3.d *Authorize the Chair and Vice-Chair to assign/remove/add members to Ad-hoc working groups to reflect members'/alternates/interested persons' request or as necessary to facilitate effective operations of the Ad-hoc working groups without a full vote of the WAG in a timely manner via e-mail.*

Laura Hunter provided a brief history of the creation of and changes to the Ad-hoc working groups. The WAG discussed the potential for quorum violations with regards to the Ad-hoc working groups. Travis Pritchard voiced concern about being on a separate Ad-hoc working group as Mallory Watson (both are representative of San Diego Coastkeeper). Michael Mace wanted to insure that whatever changes occur are communicated to the Ad-hoc working group Chair.

Committee Action: Motion was made to authorize the Chair and Vice-Chair to assign/remove/add members to Ad-hoc working groups to reflect members'/alternates/interested persons' request or as necessary to facilitate effective operations of the Ad-hoc working groups without a full vote of the WAG in a timely manner via e-mail and for the Ad-hoc working group Chair to be notified, motion second by Clay Tschudy and Emily Young. Motion passed unanimously, none abstain or oppose.

Agenda Item 3.e *In the event that item 3.d. is not approved, approve the new list of members in the NRMP Ad-hoc working groups.*

Committee Action: No action taken.

Agenda Item 3.f *Consideration of positions to be communicated to the Port District on Pond 20 development Proposals.*

Todd Cardiff asked if the WAG supported the WildCoast proposal for Pond 20, the answer was "yes". Emily Young requested a clarification on the City's recommendation and Laura provided a re-cap of the proposal letters received.

Michelle White provided an update on the status of Pond 20. Michelle provided information on meetings that occurred with the member cities the week of October 29, 2012, proposals that were submitted in response to the RFP and the timeline of going to the Board of Port Commissioners with recommendations in early 2013.

Clayton Tschudy asked if there was any additional information on development, Michelle responded that there was no information at this time. Emily Young asked if CALTRANS has a role in the process, Michelle responded that the Port will be coordinating with CALTRANS and that the South County Economic Development Council has applied for grants for Palm Ave. beautification and there is a bikeway village planned. Emily recommended a program called "Complete Streets", Michelle will look into it. Jim Peugh asked about predation, Michelle said

that they are still sorting out the details regarding the mid-term and long-term mitigation needs and there is a Port consultant working on a mitigation prospectus. Todd Cardiff asked if there was a potential for private companies to purchase and use the land for mitigation banking, Michelle stated that there were a variety of proposals for mitigation. Todd asked if there were also proposals for restoration, Michelle responded that there were proposals for mitigation for future projects. Andy Yuen asked if there was a ranking to the letters of intents that were received; Michelle explained that there was not a ranking of the letters, only looking at concepts at this time. Sandy Vissman asked if there will be integration with Climate Plan efforts, Michelle stated that the Climate Plan will be used as a tool for planning for any project that happens at Pond 20. Discussion ensued between Laura Hunter and Michelle White on the timing of the Climate Plan going before the Board of Port Commissioners as it relates to Pond 20. Emily Young asked if there had been an evaluation of the cost benefit to sell the land to developers or for the Port to restore the land, Michelle responded that such a cost benefit analysis as not been done.

Committee Action: Jim Peugh motioned to have an Ad-hoc committee submit a letter to the Port on behalf of the WAG outlining recommendations for Pond 20 and to request that there be a greater than five year forecast for the use of Pond 20. The Ad-hoc committee to include Allison Rolfe, Laura Hunter, Ed Pieters, Mike McCoy, Lauren Kershek, and Jim Peugh. Mike McCoy and Ed Pieters second the motion. All in favor, none abstain or oppose.

Agenda Item 4.a: *Schedule next Agenda and Meeting Date.*

Discussion ensued on selecting meeting dates for the Ad-hoc working groups and consensus meetings. The dates, times and locations for the meetings are as follows:

Ad-hoc Working Group Meetings:

- Sea Level Rise, Restoration/Habitat: November 29, 2012, 1-5pm, Port Administration Building
- Marine Life and Habitat: December 17, 2012, 1-5pm, Port Administration Building
- Fauna: January 18, 2013, 9am-1pm, Port Administration Building
- Flora: January 24, 2013, 1-5pm, Port Administration Building
- Adjacency Impacts: February 7, 2013, 9am-1pm, Port Administration Building
- Education: March 1, 2013, 9am-1pm, Port Administration Building

Consensus Meetings (Entire WAG):

- Consensus I: January 10, 2013, 2-4pm, Living Coast Discovery Center
- Consensus II: February 21, 2013, 2-4pm, Living Coast Discovery Center
- Consensus III & Implementation: March 14, 2013, 2-5:30pm, Living Coast Discovery Center

Jim Peugh requested to be added to the Marine Life and Habitat Ad-hoc working group. Brenna Vredevelde from Tierra Data, Inc. (TDI) reviewed how to access the Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) website and the Ad-hoc working group website. Laura Hunter

requested that everyone access the website. Emily Young, Mike McCoy and Travis Pritchard voiced that they will need the NRMP binders from TDI. Brenna gave an overview of which internet browsers to use and some of the potential problems with using Internet Explorer. Discussion ensued on the password protection of the websites and how it relates to not violating the quorum/Brown Act rules. Once the Ad-hoc working groups have concluded, then the work of the working groups will be communicated to the entire WAG. Documents are available to all members of the WAG.

Agenda Item 4.b: *Next meeting December 13, 2012 at the Chula Vista Nature Center.*

The December 13, 2012 meeting has been cancelled; the next meeting of the WAG will be on January 10, 2013 and will be a Consensus meeting on the Sea Level Rise, Restoration/Habitat and Marine Life and Habitat sections of the NRMP.

Information Items

- I. Information Items:*
 - a. Announcements/ Items of Interest*
 - o No items of interest.

Schedule next Agenda and Meeting date

- o The next meeting will be January 10, 2013, 2:00 p.m. at the Living Coast Discover Center.

Meeting was adjourned by Co-Chair Allison Rolfe at 4:00 p.m.

Attachment B

Wildlife Advisory Group

NRMP Work In Progress & Consensus Meeting

Purpose of this Meeting: Provide guidance to consultant on synthesized outcomes of two focus group meetings for incorporation in NRMP: Sea Level Rise and Marine Life, Habitats, and Water Quality.

Agenda:

1. NRMP Vision Exercise (10 minutes). Distribute “sticky notes,” markers, and highlighters as people enter room for silent exercise to edit and provide individual words, phrases, or drawings about the NRMP Vision. What are the core values and ideals we are trying to foster? What is the ideal outcome for adapting to the future? What is unique, important, and irreplaceable about this place and should be promoted? What do you want the planning area to look and feel like in 20 years?

Vision Statements are the inspiring words chosen to clearly and concisely convey the outcome for the plan area. A clear vision statement powerfully communicates intentions and motivates an organization to realize an attractive and inspiring common vision of the future. The vision communicates both purpose and values. A vision:

- *Is realistic and idealistic*
- *Describes the desired future state of the plan area as a whole*
- *Clarifies purpose and direction*
- *Inspires enthusiasm and encourages commitment*
- *Is well articulated and easily understood*
- *Reflects the uniqueness of the organization (what we stand for, what we do better than anyone else)*
- *Is ambitious*

A vision that meets these criteria accomplishes the following:

- *Attracts commitment and energizes people*
- *Establishes a standard of excellence*
- *Bridges the present and the future*

2. Review Meeting Objective (5 minutes)
 - a. Distribute Storyboard Handout of “road map” for NRMP development]: Where we are and where we are going
 - b. Explanation of what occurred in past meetings
 - c. Internet feedback incorporated

Divide into three stations: (1) NRMP Vision, NRMP Goals and Guiding Principles, Map to Draw On, Technical Questions; Topics Deferred Until Later; (2) Sea level Rise, Research & Restoration; and (3) Marine Life, Marine Habitats & Water Quality. [People can float between stations. Each Station to be concurrently staffed by consultant]

3. Working Session I (45 minutes): Sea Level Rise, Restoration and Research
4. *The objectives and strategies, questions and concerns developed by each Focus Group will be displayed. They have been fleshed out for review by the Focus Group to see if the consultant has captured ideas as intended, and by the WAG as a whole for edit and comment. All concerns raised at the Focus Group meetings are developed into objectives and metrics, whether or not this was finished at the earlier meetings.*

Break (5 minutes)

5. Working Session II (45 Minutes): Marine Life, Habitats & Water Quality

The objectives and strategies, questions and concerns developed by each Focus Group will be displayed. They have been fleshed out for review by the Focus Group to see if the consultant has captured ideas as intended, and by the WAG as a whole for edit and comment. All concerns raised at the Focus Group meetings are developed into objectives and metrics, whether or not this was finished at the earlier meetings.

6. When group reassembles, try to rank goals/objectives into 3 categories using sticky dots or discussion. Identify criteria the group is using (10 minutes).

7. Chula Vista Bayfront NRMP Website – continue to provide feedback and comment in the workspace. (1 minute)

8. Exit Survey – one-page handout [get feedback on meeting satisfaction and how to improve] (5 minutes)

Attachment C

WAG AD-HOC Committee DRAFT

January XX, 2013
Chairman and Board of Port Commissioners
San Diego Unified Port District
PO Box 120488
San Diego, CA 92112

RE: South Bay Wildlife Advisory Group Recommendations on Restoration of Pond 20.

Dear Chairman Moore and Port Commissioners:

The South Bay Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG) was established in 2010 to advise the Port on issues concerning fish, wildlife, and their habitats in south San Diego Bay. This letter responds to the November 8, 2012 presentation by San Diego Unified Port District (Port) staff to the South Bay Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG) of a general concept regarding future use(s) of Pond 20, including: beautification of Palm Avenue adjacent to Pond 20, restoration of a portion of the parcel for future use as a mitigation bank, and development of a portion of the parcel. No details were provided regarding the level or type of development envisioned as part of the general concept.

As has been noted previously, Pond 20 lies adjacent to and within the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge and has significant wetland restoration potential due to its location and topography. Wetland habitats, including salt marsh, mudflats, and upland transition habitats, have been drastically reduced in San Diego Bay as well as the coast of California. Based upon data presented in the Port's draft San Diego Bay Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP, Port and U.S. Navy 2011) only 30.3% of the historical salt marsh remains in the Bay and most of the remaining salt marsh lies outside Port jurisdiction. The INRMP cites enhancement of south San Diego Bay (by creation of upland transition, intertidal, and subtidal habitat), as a top priority. **Pond 20 provides one of the few remaining Port tideland areas with potential for habitat enhancement or creation to implement this top priority identified within the INRMP.** In addition, the Port's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) has recognized the potential need and limited available options for wetland mitigation for existing Port tenants, and therefore included Pond 20 on the list of sites to consider for future mitigation banking.

Discussions regarding the future of Pond 20 are also occurring concurrent with development of a Port Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plan (Climate Plan, in progress). Climate adaptation and mitigation must be considered as important tools or strategies enabling a solution to climate change. We can adapt to these changes to a degree but that does not address the all important issue of mitigation or decreasing fossil fuel emissions. Our civilization will have a problem adapting to a sea level rise of 3 feet with storm surges let alone 80 to 200 feet if we continue with business as usual. It is necessary to evaluate solutions locally, globally and technologically.

The Climate Plan is expected to include analyses of the risks associated with sea level rise to infrastructure, developed areas, and natural resources of the Bay. It is also anticipated to include the Preliminary Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategies (Adaptation Strategies) that were distributed to a sub-committee of the EAC, which emphasize the need for conservation and

restoration of coastal habitat. One of the Adaptation Strategies includes “*protection of areas that may become wetlands in the future.*” Since the latest research predicts that the remaining wetlands surrounding San Diego Bay are likely to be completely inundated and lost by 2050/2100 (ICLEI 2012; R. Gersburg, unpublished data; Heberger *et al.* 2009), it is extremely important to implement this Adaptation Strategy. ICLEI’s Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategy for San Diego Bay states that the overall adaptive capacity of Bay ecosystems and critical species is limited because the majority of adjacent uplands have been developed, thus eliminating the ability of subtidal and intertidal habitats to migrate to higher elevations as sea level rises (ICLEI 2012). To address anticipated impacts to wetlands, ICLEI recommends the expansion of ecological buffers around development to allow for inland migration of coastal habitats. This is consistent with the sea level rise report from the California Climate Change Center (Heberger *et al.* 2009), which includes the recommendation:

“Wetlands and the potential migratory paths should be protected. Development should be prohibited on natural lands that are immediately adjacent to wetlands at risk. These buffer areas may be the only areas suitable for future wetland restoration projects.”

Based upon the available modeling information, the potential for inland migration of habitat around San Diego Bay will be constrained by current shoreline development and the need to protect existing infrastructure. **Pond 20 is one of few Port tidelands that is undeveloped with direct tidal access to San Diego Bay.** Therefore, it is one of the few places around San Diego Bay where implementation of the Climate Plan Adaptation Strategy (“*protection of areas that may become wetlands in the future*”), remains possible without removal or expensive modification of costly existing infrastructure (e.g. existing hotels, marinas, housing, seawalls). Allowing development within Pond 20 will reduce the Port’s ability to respond to anticipated loss of marine and coastal habitats. Habitat fragmentation has left remnant ecological systems putting species at risk. These systems must be reconnected to restore biological diversity and establish any overall functionality. The combined incremental effects of human activity, cumulative impact, pose a serious threat to the environment. This is a devastating and poorly publicly understood process resulting in degradation of important linkages within and between ecosystems. The Climate Adaptation Strategy along with interconnection and restoration of Pond 20 will enable resolution of this problem at this site and help address enhancement of the Pacific Flyway.

A portion of Pond 20 that lies within the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge is proposed for restoration as part of the Poseidon project mitigation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will soon issue the Notice of Intent describing this restoration project. An opportunity exists to link the restoration of the Port-administered portion of Pond 20 with the Poseidon project. Although the Port has accepted Letters of Interest (LOI) for development projects in Pond 20, none would result in projects that could provide the economic or environmental benefit that would result from linking the restoration of Pond 20 with the proposed Poseidon project. The cost-savings and opportunities posed by linking the restoration of Pond 20 with the Poseidon project yield the strongest possible case for the Port to make the decision to restore Pond 20 and move quickly to implement it. Restoring Pond 20 concurrently with the Poseidon project would provide an overall benefit by restoring the entire Otay River Floodplain at once rather than in separate pieces, and may also reduce the cost for engineering, construction equipment mobilization and demobilization, and transportation of fill material. To miss this window of opportunity could mean that Pond 20 stays the way it is for another 10-15 years. **We strongly urge the Port to take advantage of this opportunity to reduce costs and maximize ecological outcomes.**

In addition, restoration of Pond 20 would contribute to the protection of existing infrastructure. The restoration of Pond 20 would increase flood storage capacity for fresh water runoff which will become more necessary to protect existing development and infrastructure due to the effects of climate change.

Although addressing economic development issues is not directly part of our charge, we do have significant economic expertise on our committee. The members of the WAG recognize and support the need for and desire of the City of Imperial Beach to promote economic development. To this end, many members of the WAG supported the redevelopment of the Seacoast Inn which will be a high-quality destination hotel in Imperial Beach.

In 2001, the City's Redevelopment Agency boundaries were amended to incorporate Pond 20. Recognizing that the unattractive visual condition of Pond 20 created a perceived constraint to economic growth, the Redevelopment Agency hoped to put it on a path to revitalization. It was acknowledged three years later in the *Urban Waterfront and Ecotourism Marketing* study done by Keyser Marston with extensive public input (see pages 51-53 of *Assessment of Opportunities and Constraints* for a discussion of Pond 20) that Pond 20 provided a rich ecological amenity if restored and that if development were allowed it would need to be done sensitively. The study also identified the redevelopment of Seacoast Inn as one of the best opportunities to provide an economic catalyst to Imperial Beach. Both observations are premised upon positioning the City as an ecotourism destination and on the existence of redevelopment funds.

In light of the elimination of redevelopment agencies, it would be wise to revisit the recommendations established in this exhaustive study which links Imperial Beach's future economic success to the establishment of a "brand" for the City based on ecotourism making it a destination for visitors. As a precursor to any future planning for development in the region, a Destination Marketing Council or something similar should be established for Imperial Beach and/or South Bay region. This would go a long way to ensuring the success of the newly redeveloped Seacoast Inn (now called "Pier South") and establish an appropriate framework for determining the best use of funds within the city of Imperial Beach to position the city to realize its potential of a destination ecotourism center.

The WAG also recognizes the importance of addressing the mitigation opportunities set forth in the MOU between the City of San Diego, the City of Imperial Beach and the Port. This has been emphasized by discussions with staff and representatives from these bodies. The implementation of restoration and mitigation at this site will enable a cooperative relationship between agencies, jurisdictions, the environmental community and regulatory bodies and should be accomplished in a manner that provides revenue to MOU members.

The other opportunity that must be investigated is climate mitigation to address carbon loads that already exist in the atmosphere. New studies indicate that coastal wetland soils sequester carbon at rates 10 to 50 times greater than terrestrial forests. In addition to obvious environmental benefits, wetlands restoration projects may have a role in any regulatory scheme that utilizes carbon sequestration as part of a comprehensive carbon emissions reduction program. This makes Pond 20 very relevant to not only land mitigation but also climate mitigation as is consistent with the Port Climate Plan.

Since many circumstances surrounding Pond 20 have changed over the years including strong opposition to its development expressed by the regulatory agencies, threat of sea level rise, and

the elimination of redevelopment agencies, it would be wise to use the broadly supported Keyser Marston study as a springboard for moving forward as an ecotourism hub. It is in the Port's interest and in alignment with its stewardship and economic development charge to partner with Imperial Beach on a comprehensive ecotourism effort for the South Bay region.

In summary, Pond 20 could provide the area needed for a significant wetland restoration with an appropriate amount of upland transition habitat that would allow for future wetland migration. Undeveloped areas adjacent to San Diego Bay that can accommodate wetlands at projected future water levels are scarce, and the development of any portion of Pond 20 would result in a loss of the opportunity to mitigate sea level rise. Pond 20 provides the most cost-effective and logical area for the Port to implement the INRMP and respond to sea level rise in the coming decades.

Last, there has been expressed clear and overwhelming support from the local residents, regulatory agencies, funding community, and environmental organizations for full restoration of Pond 20. In addition, the California Coastal Commission has been clear that planning for sea level rise is a requirement for recent Coastal Development Permits. For example, the Chula Vista Bayfront Development Policies approved by the Coastal Commission include measures such as using upland areas for adaptive management to *“provide additional habitat or protection to create appropriate transitional habitat during periods of high tide and taking into account future sea level rise.”*

The South Bay WAG supports the current Port concept of beautification of Palm Avenue, and the potential for use of some of Pond 20 as a mitigation bank. However, due to the overall loss of coastal wetlands in San Diego Bay, and projected loss of remaining salt marsh and tidal flat habitats associated with sea level rise, the WAG continues to strongly recommend that the entire Pond 20 be restored as coastal habitat in a manner that will implement the Port's INRMP and allow for future wetland migration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important wildlife and environmental issue. We appreciate continued involvement in this planning process.

Sincerely,

cc. Mr. Wayne Darbeau, President Port

Literature Cited

Heberger, M., Cooley, H., Herrera, P., Gleick, P.H., and E. Moore. 2009. The impacts of sea-level rise on the California coast.

ICLEI. 2012. Sea level rise adaptation strategy for San Diego Bay. January.

Kayser Marston, Urban Waterfront & Ecotourism Study, Working Paper #1 Assessment of Opportunities and Constraints

[Port] Unified Port of San Diego and the U.S. Navy. 2011. San Diego Bay Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan.